Falling in Love, Even if I Wake from the Dream

Kunie Sakai

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夢から醒めても恋してる

坂井久仁江

MIU comics

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Kunie Sakai

This is my first book with Miu Comics.
I'm deeply moved. Yes, seriously...
I would be very
happy to hear
everyone's
impressions.

COVER DESIGN = KENJI TANI

夢から醒めても恋してる

坂井久仁江

MIU COMICS

Falling in Love,
Even if I Wake from the Dream

* CONTENTS

Asahina ...*5*

Mikami ...*51*

Kurosaki ...*97*

The Dream Continues ...*137*

The Man I Can't Forget ...*182*

朝比奈

*Asahina

LOOK, I UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BUT...
I SWEAR I'LL RETURN THEM ON TIME!
I'VE GOT A PAPER DUE IN 3 DAYS! I'VE GOT TO HAVE ALL OF THESE!
PLEASE! I WON'T CAUSE ANY TROUBLE!
DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE ALREADY CAUSING TROUBLE?
"FIVE BOOKS PER PERSON."
EVEN A CHILD IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAN READ THAT.
ASAHINA-SAN!
phew
ANNOYED

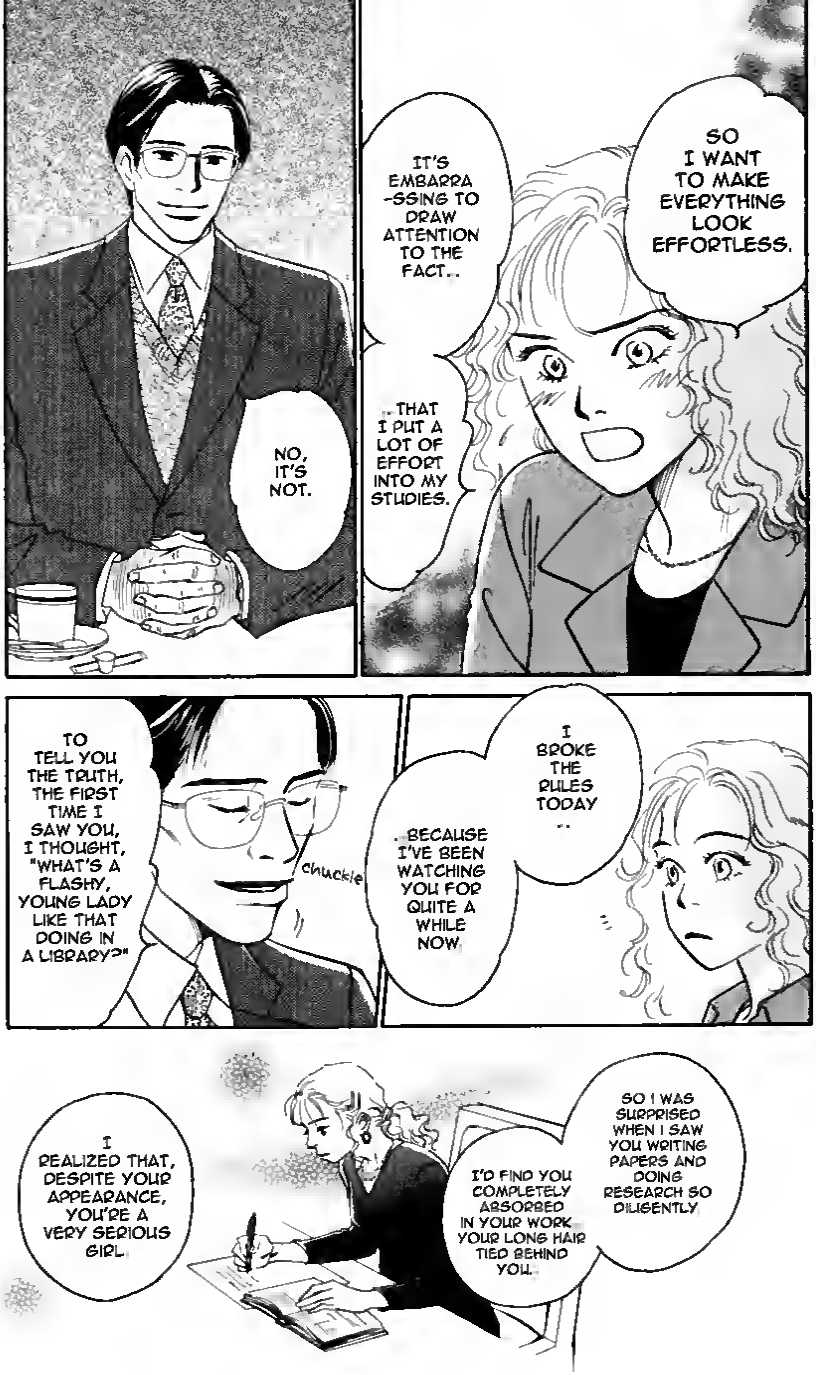
THE RULES ARE THE RULES.
IF YOU HAVE SIX OR MORE BOOKS, YOU CAN READ THEM INSIDE THE BUILDING
BUT IT'S ALREADY CLOSING TIME!
OR YOU CAN CHECK THEM OUT IN TWO GROUPS.
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DO THAT, DO I?!
HUH? HEY, WAIT A...
NEXT PERSON IN LINE, PLEASE GO AHEAD
SORRY ABOUT THE WAIT.
It's about time!
Grrrrrrrr
THE WORLD DOESN'T REVOLVE AROUND YOU, MISS.
sigh
HOW UNFOR-TUNATE!
MOST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD CAN'T AFFORD TO LOAF AROUND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY!
HOW ARE STUDENTS OR PEOPLE WITH JOBS SUPPOSED TO USE THE LIBRARY IF IT CLOSES AT SIX?!
AND YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCKS!
COME ON! THE LIBRARY CAN'T EXIST WITHOUT CUSTOMERS!

FURIOUS——……
AT ANY RATE, WE'RE CLOSING NOW
smile
PLEASE LEAVE ONE BOOK BEHIND.
……
YOU HAVE UNTIL OCTOBER 30TH TO RETURN THESE
Check
WHAT A PETTY LITTLE…!
Well, let's close up!

HUH?
Marika Ai
note
Erumu Cafe
6.30
open
Erumu Cafe

THANK YOU FOR WAITING
MARIKA AIHARA -SAN.
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT HE SAW MY LIBRARY CARD.
WHAT'LL IT BE?
HOUSE BLEND
rattle
HERE.
slide
I CHECKED IT OUT WITH MY CARD.
IT'S DUE ON THE SAME DAY AS THE OTHER FIVE, BUT PLEASE RETURN IT TO ME.
IS THIS ALLOW -ED?
shhh...!
ACTU -ALLY, NO.
SO NOT A WORD TO ANYONE.
BUT... WHY?
RELAX. I DON'T HAVE AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE.

I JUST WANT TO GET AN A+ ON THIS PAPER.
WELL, NOT EXACTLY ...
HUH?
YOU'RE A VERY SERIOUS STUDENT
Hm ..
.....
AND?
DOESN'T YOUR COLLEGE HAVE A LIBRARY?
YES, IT DOES, BUT THE BOOKS HAVE A TENDENCY TO BE BIASED.
AND
I'VE BEEN AN HONOR STUDENT SINCE I WAS A KID.
PEOPLE THINK I'M JUST "NATURALLY GOOD" AT EVERYTHING AND I FEEL LIKE I OUGHT TO BE THAT WAY, TOO
HUH?
I HATE IT...
...WHEN MY FRIENDS SEE ME STUDYING LIKE THIS!


NO, IT'S NOT.
IT'S EMBARRA -SSING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FACT..
.. THAT I PUT A LOT OF EFFORT INTO MY STUDIES.
SO I WANT TO MAKE EVERYTHING LOOK EFFORTLESS.
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU, I THOUGHT, "WHAT'S A FLASHY, YOUNG LADY LIKE THAT DOING IN A LIBRARY?"
chuckle
.. BECAUSE I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW.
I BROKE THE RULES TODAY ..
I REALIZED THAT, DESPITE YOUR APPEARANCE, YOU'RE A VERY SERIOUS GIRL.
I'D FIND YOU COMPLETELY ABSORBED IN YOUR WORK YOUR LONG HAIR TIED BEHIND YOU.
SO I WAS SURPRISED WHEN I SAW YOU WRITING PAPERS AND DOING RESEARCH SO DILIGENTLY

I FOUND THE SIGHT QUITE PLEASING...
THAT'S WHY I DECIDED TO OVERLOOK THE EARLIER TROUBLE AT THE CHECKOUT COUNTER.
OH
SORRY ABOUT THAT...
rattle
WELL...
I'LL GET THIS.
OH
I CAN PAY FOR MY O...
LET A MAN KEEP HIS PRIDE.
JUST WRITE A GOOD PAPER.
Suddenly, a library employee who meant nothing to me before...
...seemed like a real man.

Gaze
"Asahina -san" ...huh?
I bet he's around 40...
He wasn't wearing a wedding ring
He probably gets Mondays off, since the library is closed, and national holidays, too ...
MARI -KA?
WOW! I DON'T USUALLY SEE YOU STARING INTO SPACE
HM...
I'd been going out with Fumiaki since the summer.
He was very popular with women, but...
OH!
FUMI -AKI
GOT SOME FREE TIME LATER?
YOU WANNA GO SEE A MOVIE?
...lately, I'd been feeling like something was missing
I THINK I'LL PASS.
I'VE GOT SOMEWHERE TO GO

Check
ASA-HINA-SAN.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS ...
...had transferred to this guy.
My interest ...
Oh! I get it now.
...and a rather pensive profile.
He had a calm presence...
He was a mature man.
He was completely different from the little boys I'd dated up until then.

I'M RETURN -ING THESE.
すいslide?
THANK YOU.
PLEASE... LOOK INSIDE.
IS THERE SOME -THING ELSE?
.....
?
flip flip
HERE.
EXACTLY FIVE BOOKS.

SO ...
HOW ABOUT IT?
flip
Modern Art Exhibition
Monday 4:00
sigh
YES.
ALL RIGHT.

I'M GLAD ...
YES, THE "MODERN ART EXHIBIT ..." WAS VERY INTER-ESTING, WASN'T IT?
NO! I MEAN ...
... I'M GLAD YOU CAME TODAY.
IN THE BACK OF MY MIND, I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE GOING TO STAND ME UP.
YOU'RE NOT GIVING YOURSELF ENOUGH CREDIT.
Ha ha
DO YOU OFTEN GO TO ART EXHIBITS LIKE THAT?
ACTUALLY, NEVER
I STOLE THE TICKETS FROM MY LITTLE SISTER.
HUH?

NOTHING. I FEEL SORRY FOR YOUR SISTER.
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
Ha ha ha
—SO I FIGURED SOMEONE SHOULD PUT THEM TO GOOD USE!
AND SHE JUST KEPT WHINING, "I DON'T HAVE ANYBODY TO GO WITH.."
TODAY WAS THE LAST DAY!
I'M THE ONE THAT PEOPLE HATE ..
MOST OF THE GUYS I GO OUT WITH TELL ME I'M NOT VERY CUTE
OH, DON'T FEEL SORRY FOR HER. SHE IS THE KIND OF PERSON EVERYONE LIKES.
I THINK YOU'RE CUTE.
BESIDES ...
I DON'T THINK I SHOULD HAVE TO SUCK UP TO PEOPLE.
BUT I DON'T CARE. I AM WHO I AM.

YOU'RE A VERY CUTE YOUNG LADY.
YOU HAVE A STRONG WILL, BUT ...
OH ..
blush
Ever since I was a child, I'd get flustered ...
... whenever someone called me "cute."
OH, MY! YOU'RE GETTING EVEN CUTER.
SHOULD I SAY IT AGAIN? "YOU'RE A CUTE, YOUNG LADY."
MARGH!
CUT IT OUT!
Ha ha ha~
CUTE AND BASHFUL.

WE SEPARATED FIVE YEARS AGO.
YOUR WIFE ...?
!!
HAHAHA ... SORRY.
MY WIFE USED TO SAY THAT, TOO.
UGH ...
YOU'RE MEAN, ASAHINA -SAN.
HUFF
WE WERE ONLY MARRIED FOR TWO YEARS.
I WAS A LITTLE UPTIGHT AND MEAN -SPIRITED, SO...
...SHE STOPPED LOVING ME AND LEFT.
SHE'S LIVING WITH HER PARENTS IN NAGANO NOW.
IF I WERE HER, I WOULDN'T STOP LOVING YOU.

ASAHINA-SAN...
...WOULD YOU THINK IT STRANGE IF I SAID I WANTED TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER?
A BEAUTIFUL, YOUNG WOMAN LIKE YOU?
Ha ha!
I'D CONSIDER IT AN HONOR
I'M SERIOUS!
DIDN'T YOU SAY ...
...I'M MORE SERIOUS THAN I LOOK?!
WELL, THIS ISN'T PUPPY LOVE! IT'S NOT LIKE I'M STILL A VIRGIN! WHEN I INVITED YOU ON A DATE TODAY, I WAS HOPING YOU MIGHT KISS ME.
I MEAN ...
...I WAS HOPING THAT YOU AND I COULD SERIOUSLY ...
HEY, HEY!
SHOCKED

SHHH
ba-thump
A YOUNG LADY
SHOULDN'T SHOUT THESE THINGS IN THE STREET
He didn't kiss me.
DO YOU FIND ME ANNOYING?
He just pet me calmly, as if soothing a child.
Even so, my heart started beating wildly.

NO, YOU'RE NOT ANNOYING.
DAMN IT.
I'M TOO OLD FOR THIS.
His low voice whispering in my ear...
...my head whirling from the wine I drank earlier...
DOES THAT MEAN ...?
FOR NOW ...
...LET'S JUST ARRANGE ANOTHER DATE.
I felt as if I were in a dream.

"LET'S BREAK UP...?" WHY? MARIKA ...
I'VE MET SOMEONE ELSE..
...SO I CAN'T GO OUT WITH YOU ANYMORE, FUMIAKI.
WAIT! HOW CAN YOU ..?
LOOK, I'VE ALREADY MADE UP MY MIND.
YOU SHOULD GO LOOK FOR SOMEONE ELSE, TOO.
...my heart felt no pain...
OH!
I'M SO SORRY
Even though I'd hurt a nice guy like Fumiaki...
WELL
GOOD BYE

...because my heart was already full of Asahina-san.
He was quite knowledgeable and I learned a lot from him.
He treated me like a lady.
...the things I wouldn't tell other people... my lectures.
He listened calmly to all my complaints ...
HEY ...
I felt like I could relax around him and depend on him..

...DO YOU LOVE ME?
YES.
REALLY?
REALLY.
HOW MUCH?
MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD?
OH, MY
WHAT A SPOILED YOUNG LADY YOU ARE!
I WONDER IF I'M GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU...
On my fore head
... my cheek ...
... my ear ...
... he kissed me, but ...

...he never did more than that.
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU KNOW, I WOULDN'T MIND IF ...
HM?
"IT'S NOT LIKE I'M STILL A VIRGIN"
GRR .!!
YOU'RE SO MEAN!
SORRY, SORRY
chuckle
ISN'T IT A LITTLE SOON?
LET'S SAVE THAT PLEASURE FOR THE FUTURE.
This calm attitude made him seem even more mature ...
... however ...

IS THIS ..
..A PHOTO -GRAPH OF YOUR WIFE?
HMP
OH, THAT ..
I'VE BEEN USING IT AS A BOOK -MARK
I forgot
WHAT'S SHE LIKE?
WHAT'S SHE LIKE?
ORDIN -ARY
ORDIN -ARY?
HEY, HEY, GIVE ME A BREAK
YOU'RE NOT JEALOUS, ARE YOU?
WHOM DO YOU LOVE MORE?
ME OR HER?
!!!

I
...
...DON'T WANT TO GO HOME TONIGHT.
Really?
MARIKA.
YOU.

MM...
This is the first time I've seen Asahina san sleeping...
That's right...
Last night, we..
He seems so defenseless.
How nice!

He was very gentle last night, too.
And, yet, passionate ...
It seems I discovered an unexpected side of you ..
Mn ... ... Ka ...
RYOU -KO ..?
RYOU . KO.

OH ...
MARI ...
shocked
WHO'S NAMED RYOUKO? YOU SAID "RYOUKO."
COULD IT BE ...
YOUR WIFE ...?
heh ...
YEAH.
THAT'S RIGHT.

"THAT'S RIGHT."
WHY?
WHY ARE YOU CALLING OUT YOUR WIFE'S NAME NOW?
DIDN'T YOU GUYS SPLIT UP A LONG TIME AGO?
YES, WE DID.
I GUESS I WAS HALF ASLEEP.
SORRY.
!
WHY...?
WHY ARE YOU ACTING LIKE THIS IS NO BIG DEAL?
DON'T YOU LOVE ME NOW?
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU WERE HALF ASLEEP! IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME, YOU WOULD HAVE CALLED OUT MY NAME!

ASAHINA -SAN, THE TRUTH IS ...
THE TRUTH IS YOU'RE STILL IN LOVE WITH YOUR EX-WIFE!
AREN'T YOU?
In my heart, I thought he would deny it ...
But ...
YES.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M JUST GOING OUT WITH YOU IN ORDER TO FORGET ABOUT HER
BUT ...
YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
I was shocked that he could say it so coldly

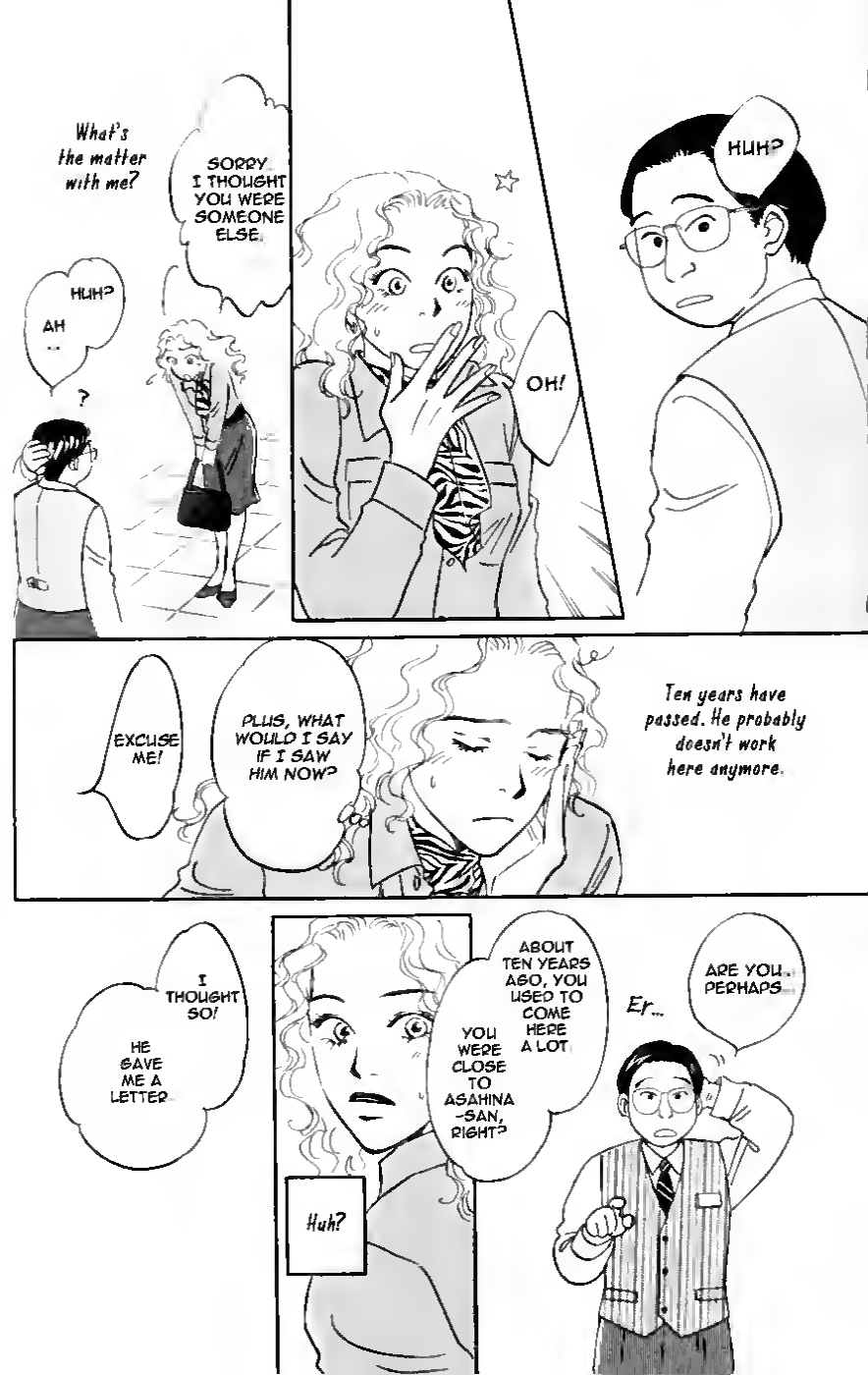
THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME AWARE OF IT.
SMACK!
clatter

I was sad...
...and mortified.
dash!!

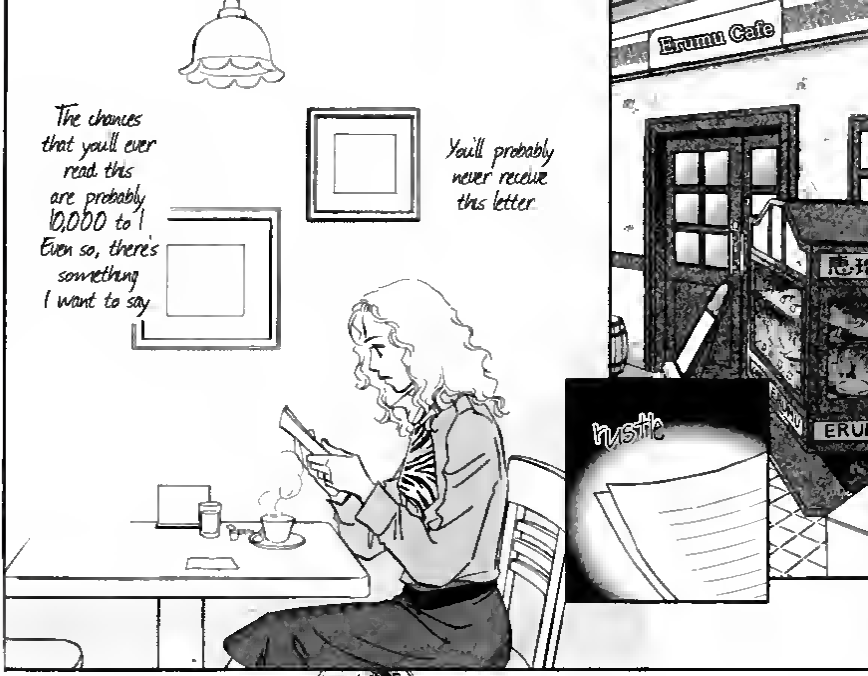
Nevertheless, when he didn't come after me, I looked back.
He was still standing with his back to me. He didn't turn around.
I never went back to the library.

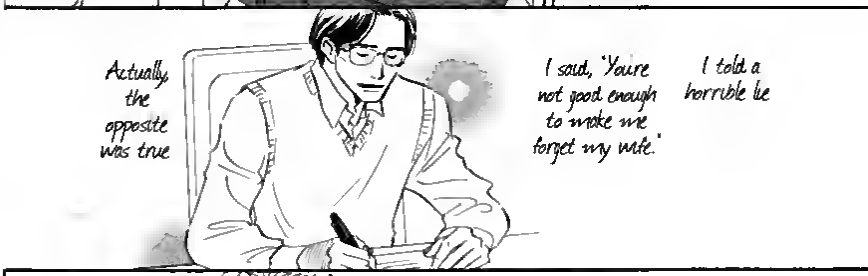
Ten years later ...
.. the neighborhood streets had changed, but, here, alone, traces of the past remained.
It was like I had slipped back in time.

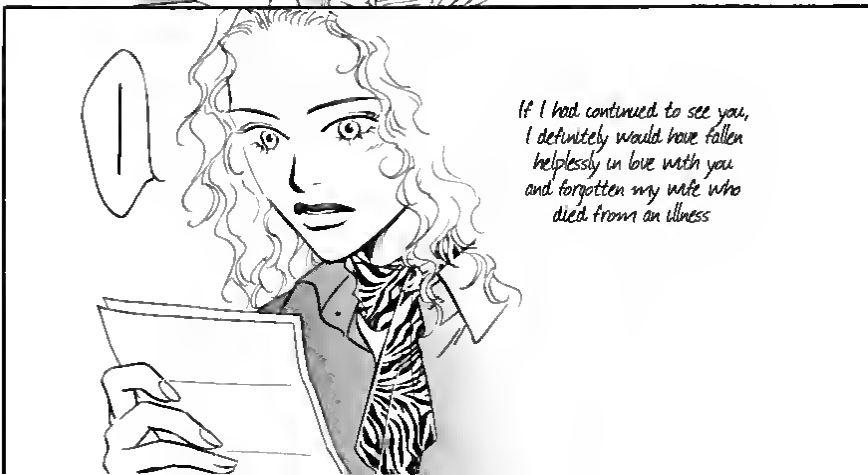
This Autumn, I'd come back to Japan...
Then, naturally, I'd recovered. I'd fallen in love a few times, gotten married, moved overseas ...
Back then, I'd felt down for a little while.
BACK THEN, I NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED.
Somehow, he wound up married to my little sister.
In the end, I didn't go back to Fumieki ...
FLIP FLIP
Information
OH... THEY'RE OPEN LATER NOW.
... and, suddenly, I had the urge to visit the library again.
AND YOU CAN CHECK OUT TEN BOOKS AT A TIME.
ASAHINA -SAN ...?
EVERY -THING HAS CHANGED IN THE PAST TEN YEARS.
sigh


What's the matter with me?
SORRY I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOMEONE ELSE.
HUH?
AH ..
?
OH!
HUH?
Ten years have passed. He probably doesn't work here anymore.
EXCUSE ME!
PLUS, WHAT WOULD I SAY IF I SAW HIM NOW?
ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO, YOU USED TO COME HERE A LOT.
YOU WERE CLOSE TO ASAHINA -SAN, RIGHT?
Huh?
I THOUGHT SO!
HE GAVE ME A LETTER.
Er...
ARE YOU, PERHAPS...

WOW!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE DAY HAS COME FOR ME TO DELIVER IT
IT'S BEEN LOCKED UP FOR SO MANY YEARS
EXCUSE ME, BUT
WHERE IS ASAHINA -SAN NOW?
HE INHERITED A SMALL BOOKSTORE IN NAGANO FROM HIS WIFE'S FAMILY
AH HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE HE LEFT THIS JOB?
SO ....
... HE REMARRIED HIS WIFE?
That old geezer
HUH?
HUH? OH, NO, NO!
HE WAS A WIDOWER.
MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN UP A STABLE JOB TO GO OUT THERE.
BUT THAT GUY, DESPITE WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK, WAS A HOPELESS ROMANTIC
!!!


Erumu Cafe
The chances that you'll ever read this are probably 10,000 to 1
You'll probably never receive this letter
Even so, there's something I want to say
Trustie
ERU

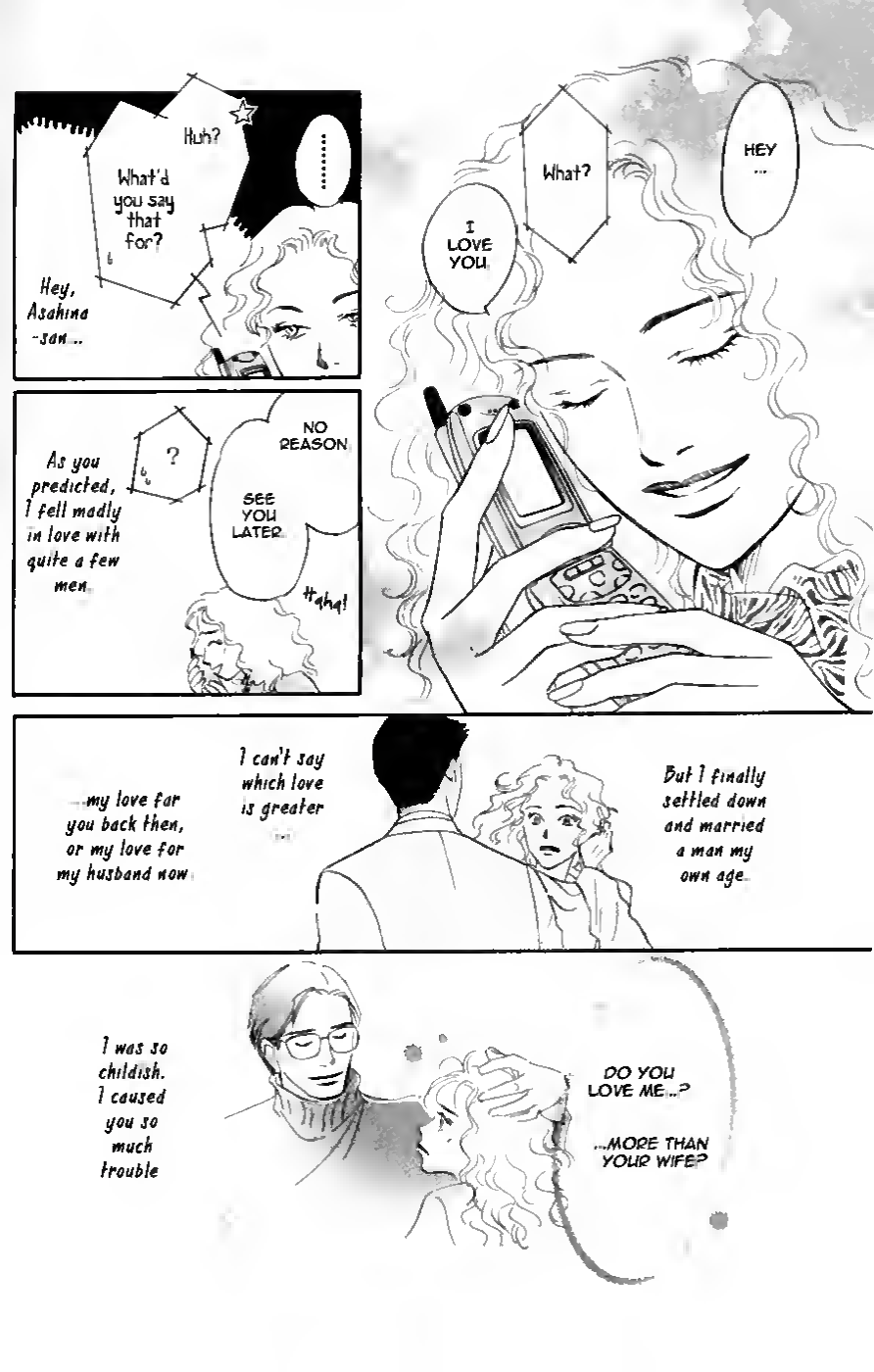

Actually, the opposite was true
I said, 'You're not good enough to make me forget my wife.'
I told a horrible lie


If I had continued to see you, I definitely would have fallen helplessly in love with you and forgotten my wife who died from an illness

and you would fall madly in love with him
In time, a new and fascinating man would appear before you...
Our relationship was going well at the moment, but, eventually, I thought you'd want someone better than me
that you would awake from the illusion of love
And so I was afraid
I wish I could see what you're like now.
Nevertheless...
...I loved the young you wholeheartedly.
I couldn't bear to lose the woman I loved again
I was a coward. I was too afraid to face that possibility
I decided to leave you before I got too involved.
I'm sure you've become a lovely woman
I wonder how old you'll be when this letter reaches you?
I will probably never see you again, but I will never forget you.

It's unfair ...
Please be happy
Why tell me this now?
plop
plop
plop
Me, too ...
"I will never forget you."
But ...
DAMN. THAT SNEAKY, OLD GEEZER
sniffle
IT'S LIKE HE SET SOME KIND OF TIMER
Sometimes, you called me "young lady..."
..in a deep, gentle voice..
I was strong willed and stubborn, but, in front of you, I was just a cute, young girl.

I still miss...
...those Autumn days.
buzz buzzz
Then let's meet up a little later. I'm in the mood for some grilled beef.
SURE
OKAY
Suddenly back to reality.
Hey, you still busy?
HELLO?
UM, YEAH
WH...
OH
Incoming call
Husband
Back then, I didn't have a cell phone.
Really?
NO, I'M OKAY.
Eh? What's wrong? Your nose sounds stuffed up.


Huh?
What'd you say that for?
Hey, Asahina -san...
HEY ...
What?
I LOVE YOU.
As you predicted, I fell madly in love with quite a few men.
?
NO REASON
SEE YOU LATER.
Hahaha!
...my love for you back then, or my love for my husband now.
I can't say which love is greater...
But I finally settled down and married a man my own age.
I was so childish. I caused you so much trouble.
DO YOU LOVE ME...?
...MORE THAN YOUR WIFE?

You were kind, but also a little mean.
Goodbye.
I've awakened to reality.
I will never see you again, but...
I'll never forget you.
...I too, will never forget...
...that I loved you.